



# AMNESTY

ELY CITY GROUP

**Remembering those experiencing injustice,  
A time for contemplation.....**

**January 2022**

**“Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners. And those who are ill-treated as if you yourselves were suffering.” Hebrews: 13:3**

*Once again, a special time has been set aside in Bishop Alcock's Chapel between the two morning services on the first Sunday of each month from 9.00am to 10.15am. Here we can hold in mind or pray for the people whose cases are highlighted for the current month. This meditation is open to those of all faiths and none.*

## **Turkey – Human Rights Defender retained in jail**

Osman Kavala is a businessman, activist and philanthropist who has supported numerous civil society organisations in Turkey since the early 1990s. He has been arbitrarily detained in Istanbul's high security prison since 2017. In 2019 he and other rights advocates and journalists were accused of being behind 2013 protests in Gezi Park. In February 2020 he was acquitted but hours later prosecutors filed additional charges in connection with the failed 2016 coup. On 26 November 2021 the court extended his imprisonment. The hearing was part of a new trial in which his case has been joined to the cases of 51 others who face serious criminal charges of 'attempting to overthrow the government'. On 3 December the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers formally notified Turkey that it would refer Kavala's case to the European Court of Human Rights.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For Osman Kavala and his family
- For the Turkish government and courts to immediately release Osman Kavala
- For the Turkish government to stop prosecuting people for exercising their rights to freedom of speech and protest

## **United States – Guantánamo Bay still not closed**

Saifullah Paracha is one of 13 people cleared for release, some over a decade ago. He has never been charged with a crime. Six US government agencies agree he should not be in Guantánamo Bay, and he was cleared for release on 18 May this year after being locked away for 17 years. He should be at home with his family. But he is still in Guantánamo today at the age of 74. He had his third heart attack last year and may well not survive another. There are still 39 detainees left in the prison despite promises by Barack Obama and Joe Biden to close it.

Please hold in mind or pray:

- For Saifullah Paracha and all other detainees cleared for release but still held in Guantánamo Bay
- For Guantánamo Bay to be closed
- For detainees to be released to a secure country where they are enabled to see their families and return to normal life.

## **Morocco: Activist raped by security forces**

Sultana Khaya is the president of the 'League for the Defence of Human Rights and against Plunder of Natural Resources' and is known for her vocal activism in defence of the right of self-determination for the Sahrawi people. In November 2020 Sultana and her family were placed under house arrest by the head of the police forces in Boujdour. She has not been presented with an arrest warrant or a court order, or informed of the reason for her arrest. On 15 November security agents broke into her house, digitally raped her and sexually assaulted her two sisters and 80-year-old mother. They also searched the house, damaging doors and closets, throwing belongings onto the floor and pouring toxic substances around. The detention of Sultana and her family is part of a wider crackdown by the Moroccan authorities on Sahrawi activists within Western Sahara.

### **Please hold in mind or pray:**

- For Sultana Khaya and her family who have been unlawfully detained and assaulted
- For the authorities to put an end to the attacks against Sultana and her family and ensure that those responsible are brought to justice in fair trials.
- For the authorities to immediately end the arbitrary house arrest against Sultana Khaya and her family and respect their rights to freedom of movement, expression and association.

### **Good news:**

In December Rukhshana Media (<https://rukshana.com/en/>) was given the Marie Colvin Award in London for bravery in reporting. Founded by Zahra Joya in 2020, the Afghan women's media organisation provides 'different perspectives of male-dominated Afghanistan in the face of death threats and intimidation'. It is named in memory of a young woman who was stoned to death in 2015 for having fled with a lover from a forced marriage.

**Sources for cases:** Amnesty International

'I pray for all of us, oppressor and friend, that together we may succeed in building a better world, through human understanding and love, and that in doing so we may reduce the pain and suffering of all sentient beings.'

**Dalai Lama XIV**

*"To clasp one's hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world."*

Please keep this sheet to hand and use it in prayer or meditation, and any action you feel and find possible.

Your local Amnesty group can be contacted at [www.amnestyelycity.org.uk](http://www.amnestyelycity.org.uk)

## ELY AMNESTY NEWS

Our monthly planning meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month. We have reluctantly made the decision to hold January's meeting (4th January at 7pm) on Zoom rather than in person due to the threat of the Omicron variant. Anyone interested is welcome to attend - please email [info@amnestyely.org.uk](mailto:info@amnestyely.org.uk) to receive the link.